



# I'll have to stick it

Born in Newcastle upon Tyne, **Robert Constantine** joined the 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion DLI in Gateshead before the First World War as a Territorial soldier. When he left for the Western Front with his battalion in April 1915, he began writing a series of letters and cards home to his father and mother, brothers and sister. Fifty of these letters and cards still survive and are now held in Durham County Record Office. Behind accounts of everyday life, grumbles and questions about family and home, they also show how one young soldier's eagerness for action soon turned to disillusionment.

In late August 1916, 9 DLI moved south to the Somme and, in spite of heavy rain, began to train hard for action. On 4<sup>th</sup> September, Sergeant Constantine wrote to his brother, Jim, grumbling about the training and bad food.

*"We are training heavy to take part in the push and I am only wishing the war was finished before we go up, but no such luck.*

Private Robert Constantine, 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion DLI, 1<sup>st</sup> October 1914 [Ref No: D/DLI 7/137/54]



THIS IS A DRAWING OF THE CROSS WHICH WE ERECTED TO OUR FRIENDS WHO WERE KILLED DURING THE GREAT ADVANCE.

*Roland Bradford*  
COMMANDING 9<sup>th</sup> BATTALION THE DURHAM LIGHT INFANTRY.

9 DLI Cross [Ref No: D/DLI 7/680/2]

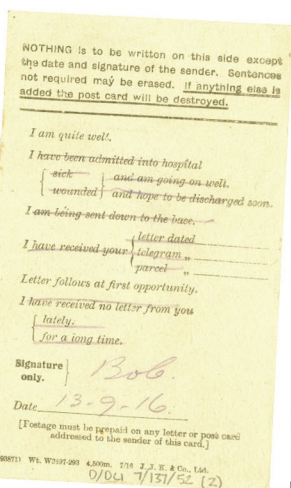
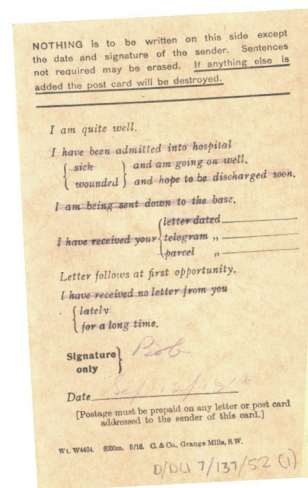


Trench Map, 3<sup>rd</sup> September 1916  
The German trenches 'Starfish' and 'Prue' ran east of the village of Martinpuich. [Ref No: D/DLI 7/503/2]

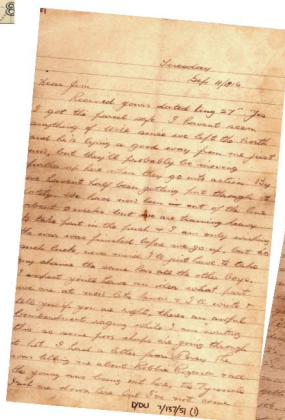
*Never mind I'll just have to take my chance the same as all the other boys. There's an awful bombardment raging while I am writing this, so some poor chaps are going through it hot. We are getting awful grub just now and I don't know how I am sticking it and the small place we are in at present you can hardly buy anything fancy - 1/3d for a loaf of bread, and tin stuff is awful dear. The sooner this is over and I'm back home the better. I am getting properly fed up sick of the damn job, but it's no use grumbling, I'll have to stick it."*

This was Robert Constantine's last letter home. He was killed in action on 15<sup>th</sup> September 1916, during an attack on the German trenches 'Starfish Line' and 'Prue Trench', north-east of High Wood. The attack failed.

After the battle his body was never found. His name is one of those recorded on the 'Memorial to the Missing' at Thiepval in France.



Field Service Postcards from Robert Constantine  
He wrote these cards shortly before he was killed in action on 15<sup>th</sup> September 1916. [Ref No: D/DLI 7/137/52]



Letter from Robert Constantine to his brother, 4<sup>th</sup> September 1916  
This was his last letter home before he was killed in action on 15<sup>th</sup> September 1916. [Ref No: D/DLI 7/137/51]

